



**Tuesdays and Thursdays (by appointment only)**

8:30 am to 11:00 am

Closed Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

U.S. Consulate General  
Suite 904, Purdy's Wharf Tower II  
1969 Upper Water Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 3R7

***NONIMMIGRANT VISA INFORMATION***  
***IMPORTANT – READ CAREFULLY***

Please read carefully the following information about obtaining your U.S. non-immigrant visa.

The Consular section of the U.S. Consulate in Halifax is located at 1969 Upper Water Street, Suite 904, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Only visa applicant(s) will be admitted. One additional person may be permitted to accompany the applicant(s) when (1) an applicant's age or health make this necessary or (2) an applicant is unable to speak English and requires the services of an interpreter.

Canadian citizens traveling to the U.S. temporarily, do not require a visa but must provide proof of citizenship, (i.e. birth certificate issued by the Province of your birth, Certificate of Citizenship, and/or Canadian passport) evidence of intent to return outside the U.S., and sufficient funds to cover stay in the U.S. if visiting.

**The U.S. Consulate in Halifax does not issue employment based ("H", "L", "O", "P", "Q", and "R") visas for non-residents of our Consular district.**

Policy Regarding Personal Appearance and Fingerprints: All applicants 14 and older MUST apply in person at which time, in addition to an interview, the consular officer will capture digital fingerprints of each applicant.

Please do not bring food or electronic equipment such as cellular phones, pagers, cameras, laptops, palm pilots, recording devices, or tape/CD players with you, as these are not allowed into the Consular waiting area. Consulate security personnel do not have the means to store these items for you.

**Effective January 1, 2004, applicants for nonimmigrant visas must apply in person and only through an appointment.** If you are in Canada call (900) 451-2778 (\$2.00 CDN per minute) or from the U.S. (900) 443-3131 (\$2.00 US per minute). **Please do not call the Consular Section directly, as they cannot provide appointment or appointment cancellation services.** If you had an appointment and need to cancel an appointment, please phone 1 (888) 611-6676. This number is for cancellations only.

**NOTE:** For further information on types of visas, visa requirements, appointments or other questions regarding visas, visit our website at [www.usembassycanada.gov](http://www.usembassycanada.gov) or call 1-900-451-6330 (touch tone) or 1-900-451-2778 (operator) in Canada and 1-900-443-3131 in the United States. All 1-900 numbers are pay-per-minute phone services that will be charged to your phone bill. Some offices, home phones, cell phones, and all pay phones are set to block calls to 900 numbers. In these situations, you will need to charge to call to your credit card by dialing 1-888-840-0032.

#### **WHAT TO BRING TO THE CONSULATE**

- **DS-156 APPLICATION FORM:** A separate form is required for each applicant regardless of age. To save time at interview, applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the DS-156 on-line at <http://evisaforms.state.gov/>. This form is assigned a barcode following completion that permits scanning of data at the time of interview. If you do not have access to this site, you may complete the enclosed form and photocopy it if you need additional copies. Citizens of Cuba, North Korea, the Peoples Republic of China, Russia, and Vietnam over the age of 16 must provide two application forms and two photos for each applicant.
- **PASSPORT SIZED PHOTO:** Please provide a recent passport-sized photo (do not attach or staple the picture to the application), measuring 2 inches by 2 inches, on a white background and date certified, for the DS-156 form. For complete photo requirements, please refer to the bottom portion of this information sheet.
- **DS-157 APPLICATION FORM:** ALL male nonimmigrant visa applicants, between the ages of 16 and 45, regardless of nationality and regardless of where they apply, must submit this form. Males and females from Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria, ages 16 years or older, must also complete this application form.
- **DS-158 APPLICATION FORM:** ALL applicants (and any dependents) applying for a U.S. student visa (F), exchange visitor visa (J) or vocational student visa (M) must complete this application form. You (and any dependents) of the above visas are also required to complete this form. Please ensure that your educational or training institution has entered your name and relevant data into the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) so that the Consular Officer can verify your documentation. For applicants with an I-20, IAP-66 or DS-2019 issued prior to February 15, 2003, please ensure that your educational or training institution has entered your name and relevant data into the Interim Student and Exchange Authentication System (ISEAS).
- **PROOF OF INCOME/TIES:** Documents that demonstrate you have financial stability and permanent ties to a country outside of the United States. If you are a visitor to Canada, this normally means ties to your home country

The following documents are generally useful to help establish ties for all applicants and must be presented when applying for a non-immigrant visa (**submit originals only**):

- A current letter of employment (or that of the family member or person providing you financial support) showing date hired, salary, full-time or part-time, and position.
- Pay slips and tax documents.
- Current school letter with proof of tuition payment and transcript of marks for current and past year.
- Property deeds.

- Canada Immigration Form IMM-1000 (Record of Landing) and the permanent resident card.
- Work authorization or study authorization/permit.
- Monthly bank statements.
- If self employed, registration of company, business permits/license, taxes filed for previous year(s), bank statements and business income.

In addition to the above please provide the following with your application:

- For business, provide documentation and detailed information on type of business or conference attending.
- For pleasure trips, provide itinerary of travel, cities to be visited, and duration of stay.
- **A VALID PASSPORT OR TRAVEL DOCUMENT:** To be eligible for a visa, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months past your intended stay in the United States. Applicants must bring evidence of their current immigration status, in Canada, as well as any documents related to prior visits to the United States. Such documents might include expired passports with old visas, I-20 Forms for former students, DS-2019 (formerly known as IAP-66) Forms for exchange visitors, I-94 cards, Employment Authorization Cards, etc.
- **PROOF OF RELATIONSHIP TO PRINCIPAL APPLICANT:** If you are applying as a dependent family member, such as a spouse or a child, you should bring proof of your relationship to the principal applicant. Such proof might include marriage certificates, birth certificates, adoption papers, etc. Documents must be in English or officially transcribed to English.
- **RECORDS OF ANY ARRESTS OR CONVICTIONS:** If you have ever been arrested or convicted of a crime, you should bring copies of relevant police and court records.

***NOTE:*** Applicants who present false or misleading documents during the course of their interview may be found permanently ineligible for further visa consideration. Persons who provide false documentation to applicants likewise may be found permanently ineligible for U.S. visas.

### **FEES:**

- **VISA APPLICATION FEE:** Each applicant must pay a U.S. \$100.00 application fee, in exact **U.S. currency only** (coins are not accepted). This application fee is non-refundable, regardless of whether or not you are issued a visa.
- **RECIPROCITY FEE:** Depending on your country of citizenship, you may also be required to pay a fee for visa issuance, known as a "reciprocity" fee. If your visa application is approved, you will be asked to pay this fee at the time of your interview. The following methods of payments are accepted: Cash in U.S. Funds, U.S. Postal Money Order or Certified check payable to U.S. Consulate General. You may also obtain this information by visiting the following web site: <http://travel.state.gov/reciprocity/index.htm>

## **WILL I QUALIFY FOR A VISA?**

In order to qualify for most categories of U.S. non-immigrant visas, you must be able to demonstrate to a U.S. Consular Officer that you have a permanent residence outside the United States that you do not intend to abandon. You may satisfy this requirement by showing you have strong economic and social ties to your country of residence. "Ties" are factors that would require you to return to your country of residence, upon completion of your temporary visit to the United States. Landed immigrants in Canada must show ties to Canada. (See heading Proof of income/ties). Applicants who are not landed immigrants must generally demonstrate ties to their home country.

Many applicants ask what documents they can bring to their visa interview that would demonstrate sufficiently their "ties" to their home country. The answer to this question is that no single document will be relevant to every case. Applicants should ask themselves the following question: "If I were visiting in the United States, what factors would cause me to end my visit and depart the United States?" Relevant factors, or "ties," outside the U.S. could be such things as a job, property, dependent children, or other important responsibilities that require your presence in your home country. (See heading Proof of income/ties). You must demonstrate to the Consular Officer that these "ties" are strong enough to compel you to return to your home country upon completion of your visit to the United States.

## **IF MY VISA IS APPROVED, WHEN WILL IT BE READY FOR COLLECTION?**

Beginning January 1, 2004, the consular section will no longer be able to return approved visas on the same day. After that date, due to database checks, visas may take up to three working days to be processed to completion. After that date, all Canadian-based visa applicants should provide express post envelopes to consular personnel at the time of the visa interview so that their passports and visas can be returned to them as soon as processing has been completed. Persons resident in the United States should expect to remain in Canada for the three working days and return to the consular section on the appointed day to collect their new visas.

Some visas may take up to 60-days or more to process, as they require the Department of State's approval.

**In all cases do not make irrevocable travel plans prior to obtaining your visa.**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE:** Visa applicants should normally apply at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in their country of residence. If you are not a resident of Canada, interviewing officers in Halifax may not have experience in evaluating the circumstances in your country of residence. You may, therefore, have greater difficulty establishing your eligibility for a U.S. visa in Halifax than you would experience in your home country. A substantial percentage of visitors to Canada are denied visas under these circumstances. Consequently, visitors to Canada are strongly urged to apply for U.S. visas in their country of residence.

## **THE U.S. NON-IMMIGRANT VISA**

The validity period of your visa and number of entries you are allowed are printed on the visa. Immigration officials at the U.S. port-of-entry have final authority to permit or deny entry to the United States. A visa entitles the bearer to apply for admission to the U.S., but does not guarantee entry. The maximum permitted length of time to stay in the U.S. is also determined by U.S. Immigration at the port-of-entry.

If you misplace your passport containing a U.S. visa or it is stolen, you should report the loss to the police as soon as possible. If you apply for a replacement visa, you will be asked for a police report detailing the circumstances of the loss. We recommend you photocopy your visa and maintain the copy in a safe place.

### **SPECIALIZED VISAS**

Most visa applications at Halifax are for business trips or for personal travel (Visa category "B"). If you are seeking another type of visa, such as for study or work in the U.S., please read the following:

Diplomatic and International Organization Workers (categories "A" and "G"). Applicants must demonstrate they will be employed by recognized diplomatic or international organization missions in the United States and will maintain that status throughout their stay in the country. Dependent family members must provide proof of relationship to the sponsor. Note: The \$100.00 application fee is not applicable.

Student Visas (categories "F" and "M"). Applicants planning to study in the U.S. must present a valid form I-20 from the institution in the United States. Please ensure that your educational or training institution has entered your name and relevant data into the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) so that the Consular Officer can verify your documentation. For applicants with an I-20, IAP-66 or DS-2019 issued prior to February 15, 2003, please ensure that your educational or training institution has entered your name and relevant data into the Interim Student and Exchange Authentication System (ISEAS). Also required is proof of adequate English language skills, and proof of sufficient funds to cover tuition and living expenses. Applicants must also be able to demonstrate that they intend to depart the U.S. upon completion of their studies.

Temporary Workers (category "First-time "H"). Applicants must present their original Form I-797, a copy of the Labor Condition Application (LCA), an employment letter (indicating nature and duration of employment as well as remuneration), and several recent pay stubs (if already working). They should also bring a complete copy of the I-129 petition with all supporting documents as well as evidence of qualifications for the job (original diplomas and transcripts). Former exchange visitors (J-1 visas) whose programs were subject to the two-year foreign residency requirement will require an original Immigration and Naturalization Service 212(e) waiver approval form. First-time "H1 - B" visa applicants who earned their qualifying academic degrees outside the U.S. or Canada are strongly urged to apply in their home countries, as Halifax consular officer(s) are generally unable to evaluate foreign academic credentials.

International Media (category "I"). Applicants must present an employment letter verifying their qualifications as a foreign journalist. They must also be able to prove their intent to depart the United States upon completion of their assignments.

Exchange Visitors (category "J"). Applicants must present a valid form DS-2019 (formerly known as IAP-66). Please ensure that your educational or training institution has entered your name and relevant data into the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) so that the Consular Officer can verify your documentation. For applicants with an I-20, IAP-66 or DS-2019 issued prior to February 15, 2003, please ensure that your educational or training institution has entered your name and relevant data into the Interim Student and Exchange Authentication System (ISEAS). Also, proof of sufficient funds to cover all expenses while

participating in the exchange program. They must also demonstrate adequate knowledge of English and that they intend to depart the U.S. upon completion of the program.

Intracompany Transferees (category "L"). Applicants must present their original Form I-797, a complete copy of the I-129 petition with all supporting documents, and information establishing the relationship between the applicant's work in the U.S. and the associated foreign business.

Alien of Extraordinary Ability, Performing Artist, or International Cultural Exchange (categories "O," "P," and "Q"). Applicants must present an original Form I-797 as well as proof of qualifications and a copy of the I-129 petition. "P" and "Q" applicants must prove their intent to depart the United States upon completion of their work.

Religious Workers (category "R"). Applicants must demonstrate they have work experience in their home country with the same religious organization they will represent in the United States.

## **PHOTO INSTRUCTIONS – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

The photograph of each visa applicant must be an un-mounted, full-face photo, taken within the past six months. A "full face" photo is one in which the applicant is facing the camera directly. The applicant should not be looking down or to either side, and the face should cover about 50 percent of the area of the photo. Although variations in hair styles and in head coverings make it difficult to rigorously define the term "face", in general, the head of the applicant, including both face and hair, should be shown from the crown of the head to the tip of the chin on top and bottom, and from hair line side-to-side. It is preferable that the ears be exposed. The key requirement is that the photograph clearly identify the applicant. The photograph should measure 2 inches square (roughly 50 mm square) with the head centered in the frame. The head (measured from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin) should measure between 1 inch to 1 3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm) with the eye level between 1 1/8 inch to 1 3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from the bottom of the photo. Photos may be either in color or black and white and must be taken against a white or off-white background. Photos should be printed without borders. Do not staple or glue Photos to Form DS-156, Nonimmigrant Visa Application. **Important:** No other photographs will be accepted. Please take these instructions with you when having your picture taken.

Note that guidance concerning head coverings remains unchanged. Head coverings are acceptable only under very limited circumstances and then only when the applicant's face is completely exposed.